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Connect Your Community *K-12 Parents Digital Literacy Survey*

Does digital literacy training and a home broadband connection improve a parent's engagement with their child's school and learning? Here at OneCommunity, we've been asserting this as fact for several years. It makes sense. A parent with digital literacy skills and a home broadband connection can monitor a child's instructional progress, communicate with the child's teachers, and provide the child with instructional supports in their home.

To test our assertions, we conducted a phone survey with hundreds of parents from Cleveland and Akron who have completed the Connect Your Community digital literacy training program over the past two years. Prior to the training, these parents were considered to be "underserved," coming from high-poverty areas with no Internet access in their home. The training included computer basics, Internet and security, and financial strategies to afford and maintain a computer and a broadband Internet connection in their home.

Do parents with digital literacy skills and a home broadband connection engage with their child's school and learning? The answer is a resounding "yes"! The broadband-enabled parents we surveyed shared that they were communicating with their child's teachers and using online resources to access school information. They also reported that with their new broadband connection, their children were engaged in online learning in their homes.

The Survey Results

Overall, seventy-three percent of connected parents indicated that the training they received through the Connect Your Community (CYC) program increased their ability to engage with their child's school, teachers and learning.

Sixty-five percent told us they use their home broadband connection to communicate with their child's school and teachers, and 75% said having home broadband access increased the frequency of their engagement with teachers and administrators. It's also important to note that compared with parents who did not have a home broadband connection, the home-connected parents were 19% more likely to communicate with their child's teachers.

Eighty percent of the parents reported that their children now complete homework, school work, or class projects using their home broadband connections. Seventy percent said their children spend approximately three hours a week engaged in school work using their home computer. Even more



impressive, 40% of the parents reported that their children are logging more than six hours of instructional time on their home computers.

Parents are also logging into school websites, with the survey revealing a 30% increase in parents' use of school websites to access school information. Twenty-seven percent of parents also reported that they used the school website to register their child for a school program or extracurricular activity.

The findings of this survey demonstrate clear benefits to school districts' incorporating strategies to engage underserved parents with access to digital literacy training and home broadband solutions.

About the Survey

In May 2012, OneCommunity conducted a phone survey of K-12 parents who had participated in the CYC computer training program in Cleveland and Akron. Connect Your Community (CYC), is a OneCommunity-led program that provides computer and broadband training and home broadband access to underserved populations. Over the past 21 months, more than 30,000 individuals have participated in Connect Your Community training in eight communities around the United States, with over 26,000 achieving "sustainable broadband adopter" status, defined as those completing 24 hours of classroom work and securing a home broadband connection.

The survey targeted CYC participants who identified themselves as parents of K-12 students when they enrolled in the program. 2,062 CYC participants identified themselves as K-12 parents. From those we were able to confirm 1,666 valid phone numbers. Over the course of six days and evenings (calls were made between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m.), a team of nine phone professionals reached 692 participants and were able to survey 456 parents who agreed to participate in the survey.

Survey design

The survey had three main paths. The baseline question for the first path asked participants to verify that they were the parents of a school-aged child. This terminated 65 of our initial 456 survey respondents, leaving us with a total of 391 attempted surveys, 342 completed surveys (less than 15% attrition). The second baseline split our survey respondents into two categories: Those with a computer and broadband connection in their home (231 or 68% of the overall sample), and those without a home broadband connection (111 or 32% of the overall sample). The members of these two categories were given survey questions that related to their connection status. For connected parents, the survey questions centered on their use of the Internet as it related to enabling them to engage with their child's school and teachers. For unconnected parents, survey questions revolved around understanding the barriers to connection.

Respondents who reported that they still lack a home broadband connection reported that cost is the largest barrier to acquiring home broadband access. Asked what cost would make home broadband service affordable to them, these respondents cited an average amount of approximately \$10.00 per month.



Next steps

Parents who were surveyed came to the CYC program for a variety of personal reasons. None enrolled in classes that were specifically billed for parents. In most cases the parents attended CYC trainings to improve their job skills, learn more about the Internet, or develop strategies on how to afford a computer and broadband connection.

Capitalizing on several intersecting programs and opportunities with the Cleveland Housing Network and the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland, we have adapted the CYC Digital Literacy curriculum to include parent-specific electives and delivered it to parents of children that attend school in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. We plan to survey these parents in the coming months to compare the outcomes of our general digital literacy course to the outcomes of a parent-focused digital literacy course. We are confident that the results will confirm our assertions that digital literacy training and a home broadband connection, paired with specific parent-focused activities, will have an even greater impact on parents' engagement in their children's education.

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For more information about OneCommunity and the Connect Your Community Broadband Adoption Initiative, please visit our websites.

Connect Your Community – www.connectcommunity.org

OneCommunity – www.OneCommunity.org

We'd also like to thank our partners in Cleveland and Akron for their hard work, dedication, and service in helping over 8,500 of our neighbors to become sustainable broadband adopters.

Cleveland Housing Network - www.chnnet.com

The Akron Urban League - www.akronurbanleague.org

Ashbury Senior Computer Community Center - www.asc3.org

Esperanza - www.esperanzainc.org

Famicos Foundation - www.famicos.org

Fairfax Renaissance Development Corporation - fairfaxrenaissance.org

Cuyahoga Community College – www.tri-c.edu